suggest mitigating measures. The Committee after inspection and detailed discussion with the local officials of the three States submitted the report suggesting action on the part of three States as well as Central Government. One of the important recommendations was to create Inter State Coordination Committee to deal with the situation. Since the elephants originally migrate from Karnataka, Govemment of Karnataka was requested to constitute a Coordination Committee. The Government of Karnataka has constituted the Committee under the chairmanship of Conservator of Forest, Kanara Circle.

(d) and (e) Ministry do provide financial assistance to States/UTs under the Project Elephant Scheme to compensate farmers. Based on the report of the Committee, Ministry has decided to provide financial and technical assistance to Government of Goa to deai with the situation. The State Government has been requested to submit Action Plan so that necessary funds are released to the State. The Action Plan from Government of Goa is awaited.

Forest cover in Goa

311. SHRI SHANTARAM LAXMAN NAIK: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) the assessed area of forest cover of the State of Goa in the years 1961,1971,1981,1991 and 2001;

(b) the steps taken by Central Government and the State Government for the purpose of increasing forest cover;

(c) the area covered by Government forests and private forests, respectively, as on date;

(d) the methodology adopted by the authorities to assess Government forests and private forests;

(e) whether it is a fact that these assessments are faulty and without documentary basis;

(f) whether Government have issued any guidelines to the State Governments in the matter of assessing forest lands; and

(g) if so, details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI NAMO NARAIN MEENA): (a) The assessment of

forest cover of the country using remote sensing satellite data started in 1987 by Forest Survey of India (FSI). FSI publishes a State of Forest Report (SFR) biennially. The total Forest Cover in respect of Goa as per the State of Forest Reports are given below:

Forest Cover of Goa:

SFR Year	1987	1989	1991	1993	1995	1997	1999	2001	2003
Forest, cover	1240	1255	1255	1250	1250	1252	1251	2095	2156 (Sq,Km.)

(b) The Central Government is providing financial assistance to the State Government in protecting the forests from fire etc. and for afforestation and regeneration of degraded forests and adjoining forest lands, increasing the productivity of the forests thereby. The Ministry has also initiated the process of public-private partnerships to invite investment of the private sector in the forestry activities.

Apart from this, the other measures taken by the Central and State Governments are:

(1) Strict enforcement of Indian Forest Act, 1927, Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972, Forest (Conservation) Act 1980, and Environment (Protection) Act, 1986 and the rules and guidelines made thereunder.

(2) Management measures like working of forests according to approved Working Plans rationalizing of felling and transit regulations for tree species grown on non-forest private lands to promote large-scale afforestation in non-forest areas. Forest DevelopmentAgencies and eliciting people's participation through Joint Forest Management (JFM).

(c) and (d) Forest Cover assessment is based on the interpretation of remotely sensed satellite data irrespective of legal status (Government forests and Private forests) of the land. Ground truthing is the essential part of the methodology.

(e) to (g) Assessment of Forest cover is being done by an organization of the Central Govemment—Forest Survey of India (FSI). The assessments of forest cover have been duly documented with inherent limitations of remote sensing technology. Directions have been issued to Forest Survey of India (FSI) which is the organization assessing the forest and tree cover fcj the whole country. FSI interacts with State Governments for the same.